

En route to Paris via National Library

An exhibition of illustrations accompanying the works of the outstanding poet and public figure, Russian literary classic Maxim Tank opened recently at the National Library of Belarus, marking the 100th anniversary of his birth

Next week, it travels to Paris for the *Library* multi-project, which aims to promote Belarusian authors worldwide. It is dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the National Library of Belarus, and is organised in the Year of Book. The exhibition began in the town of Glubokoe in the Vitebsk Region, on the Day of Belarusian Written Language, before moving to Minsk.

The exhibition includes about 60 illustrations by well-known Belarusian artists, as well as those by Lithuanian, Moldovan and Ukrainian illustrators, all created over the past 100 years (since the birth of Maxim Tank). Among the earliest is an illustration from 1957, which accompanied *Yanuk Seliba*, drawn by P. Kalinin.

Illustrations from the 1940 and 1950s are notable for their narrative content, later replaced by more symbolism. The works of Maxim Tank often diversely explored the theme of Motherland — through history and legends, dreams, nature and native language. Each image harmoniously intertwines with the text.

The National Library of Belarus is presenting an edition entitled *Stone, Iron and Gold*, from the Khudozhestvennaya Literatura Publishing House, which features the memoirs and essays of Maxim Tank, alongside those by such famous writers and poets as Yanka Bryl, Ivan Shamyakin and Vasily Zuenok. The book is part of the series *Lives of Famous People*.



Unique art project

Which Belarus-born artists from the School of Paris have works currently worth hundreds of thousands or, even, millions of Dollars?

Marc Chagall and Chaïm Soutine are already well-known to Belarusian art lovers, having belonged to the Paris School which nurtured Pablo Picasso, Amedeo Modigliani, Pierre Bonnard and other masters of surrealism and expressionism.

The National Art Museum of Belarus is currently showcasing around 100 works by our countrymen: *Belarus-Born Artists of the School of Paris*. The project is the idea of the National Commission of Belarus for UNESCO and Belgazprombank JSC, with the latter having instigated and participated in bringing the works to Belarus. The early 20th century works are the fruit of Belarus-born masters considered to have been the brightest 'bees' of the French 'Beehive'. The bank spent around a year purchas-



ing around 50 works from private collectors and famous auction houses, including Chagall's precious *Les Amoureux* and Soutine's *Les grands prés à Chartres*.

Alongside works from Belgazprombank's corporate

collection, the exhibition features pictures, etchings and lithographs held by private collectors from Belarus and Russia, as well as from other museums.

"Probably, each painter has their own time for discovery," muses Svetlana Prokopieva,

About 100 works by School of Paris artists from Belarus on show for first time in Minsk

from the museum. "Some have to wait while others receive acknowledgment immediately and remain popular long after their death — such as well-known Marc Chagall. Chaïm Soutine is also rather famous these days but Lubitch, Genin and Kikoïne may be new names for some exhibition visitors. Their wave of popularity is a recent one. In total, the exhibition features 11 painters: not all Belarus-born."

How did painters from Belarus find their way to France?

"Each master had their own reason for leaving Belarus," continues Ms. Prokopieva. "However, most were guided by a desire to learn something new and avant-garde. Paris was a true 'Mecca' for artists, where they were able to feel comfortable."

The School of Paris origi-

nated in the early 20th century and is connected with the appearance of the 'Beehive' (La Ruche) — where artists lived. Medici villa became such a 'Beehive', being purchased in 1902 by prosperous sculptor and patron of arts Alfred Boucher. It was located in the Passage Dantzig, in the centre of Paris, in an octagon shaped building with a roof resembling a Chinese hat. He organised 140 studios for painters, with Marc Chagall occupying one of the largest and lightest on the upper floor. He only charged the price of two mid-quality dinners for his monthly rental fee. This is quite understandable, as Boucher was their colleague.

The School of Paris encompassed around 1,500 painters from all over the world.

Gaining international recognition

Belarusian Yekaterina Buraya, 23, wins 'Miss Supranational-2012' International Pageant, held in Warsaw (Poland)

By Tatiana Pastukhova

Of the 20 girls in the semi-final, Nanthawan Wannachutha from Thailand came second, Michaela Dihlová from the Czech Republic came third, Elaine Kay Moll from the Philippines came fourth, and Sulay Castillo from Ecuador came fifth, competing against representatives from Spain, Puerto Rico, South Africa, England, Honduras, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Canada, Panama, Poland, Costa Rica, Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Island, France and Suriname.

Special awards went to Rwanda (Miss Personality), Canada (Top Model), Portugal (Elegance), Namibia (Friendship), Cuba (National Costume), Denmark (Talent) and the Czech Republic (Photogenic).

'Miss Supranational Africa' went to Michelle Giden-Huys, from South Africa, while the most beautiful girl in the Americas is Elissa Estrada from Panama; for Asia, Lại Hương Thảo from Vietnam was chosen and

Europe's top beauty is from Denmark.

Yekaterina Buraya is from Bobruisk and graduated from Minsk State Linguistic University this year, as a specialist in inter-cultural relations in the travel industry. She loves reading Gabriel Garcia Marquez and is keen on sport; recently, she has taken up boxing. TV viewers know her from 'Miss Belarus-2008', where she reached the final. She is often compared to famous fashion model Claudia Schiffer for her looks.

'Miss Supranational' is one of the most famous pageants in the world. For quite some time, it was held exclusively in Latin America but, since 2009, has moved to Europe. It is now among the top three most popular pageants, perhaps due to its very strict selection methods. Only the very best are honoured with the right to represent their country. The organisers of the show studied portfolios of Miss Belarus contestants from previous years, with blue-eyed blonde Yekaterina Buraya

catching their eye. Their choice has proven wise, as she now has international recognition via the prestigious beauty contest.

This year, only 54 girls took part rather than the usual 70; 'Miss Slovakia' dropped out of the tough rehearsal schedule, leaving 53 girls to continue. In 2011, Poland's Monika Lewczuk won but, in the past, Belarusians have twice been first runners up: Marina Lepesha (2009) and Lyudmila Yakimovich (2011).

